

City of Lincoln
Telecommunications/Cable Television Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes – January 25, 2018

Members Present: Kate Engel, Rebecca Henderson, Ed Hoffman, Jim Johnson, Cyndi Lamm, Helen Meeks, John Neal, Yingxiao Song, Art Zygielbaum

Members Absent: Steve Eggland, Laurie Thomas Lee

City Staff: Diane Gonzolas, Steve Huggenberger, Jamie Wenz, David Young

ALLO/NelNet: Ben Kiser, Brad Moline

Charter/Spectrum: Jarad Falk, Jeremiah Blake

WindStream/Kinetic: Scott Barnett

Call to Order/Introduction

Meeting was called to order at 4:00 pm by chair Art Zygielbaum. Zygielbaum made note of the copy of the Open Meetings Act at the back of the room. Board members and guests introduced themselves.

Review of Agenda

Agenda was presented. Zygielbaum said that David Young had requested that the discussion of Network testing and report software be moved to towards the end of the agenda, as Young would be running late. Hoffman moved approval of the agenda with that modification; Lamm seconded; motion approved 9-0.

Minutes

Minutes of the October 26 meeting were presented. Two corrections were made under City Report: one was that there was an orphan left parenthesis in the first line of that section that needed to be removed; the second was a factual correction – minutes had indicated that Jamie Wenz had been a winner of an annual award given by the Mayor to a deserving City employee, but Gonzolas said that the award is monthly rather than annually, and Wenz was one of the winners of the monthly award. Neal moved approval with those items corrected as indicated; Hoffman seconded; motion approved 9-0.

Windstream/Kinetic report

Scott Barnett reported for Windstream.

At our last meeting Barnett had reported on a tower collapse affecting one of the channels; there was a conversion to fiber about two weeks later. Channel 8 will also be converted to fiber soon. The PEG channels have all been converted to HD. Zygielbaum asked if all channels are now HD. Barnett said that Channel 8 will soon be HD; he thinks that there is a CW station that's not yet fiber.

Hoffman asked if there is an app for the service; Barnett said not yet. Hoffman asked, if an app becomes available in the future, whether it would include PEG channels. Barnett said that he would have to check; app is being finalized now. Hoffman indicated that it would be good to have PEG included in the app.

Charter/Spectrum report

Jarad Falk introduced Jeremiah Blake from Charter; Blake will be taking over as the representative at most of our future TCTAB meetings. Falk said that Blake will be very good for the position; he is very responsive. Blake said that he had worked in the legislature for a number of years; worked for Governor Heineman before that; worked in DC before that.

Falk thanked Steve Huggenberger; he said that last week he (Falk) had reached out to Huggenberger regarding a subcontractor, and that Huggenberger was very helpful.

Falk said that Charter has increased their capacity and their broadband speeds. Spectrum Internet Assist is making their company's highest speed Internet service available to low-income students or senior citizens.

Charter helped with a community event on August 16, 2017, preparing food for low income people; Falk thanked Councilwoman Lamm for attending the event and helping out.

Falk said that he has talked to Wenz about PEG channels and HD. He thinks in the weeks to come that they Spectrum will be providing the City Channel and Education Channel in HD.

Zygielbaum said that he is concerned that the PEG channels don't appear on the Spectrum Roku app. Falk said that those channels are not part of their basic service, so they may not ever be part of the Roku service. Zygielbaum said that he thinks it is covered

under the franchise agreement. We're seeing a massive change in technology, so we want to look into that. Falk said that he respectfully disagrees; he thinks that's why Roku is different from the traditional service. It's a complimentary service, and he wouldn't want it to go away because they don't have PEG. Zygielbaum said that we would possibly have a discussion later; Falk said that he would be glad to have that discussion.

ALLO/NelNet report

Brad Moline from Allo reported for Allo/Nelnet. Moline addressed a system failure that occurred on January 12th through 14th. There was a network issue; Allo was doing maintenance on a redundant route, and there was an error. Tens of thousands of customers were just fine, but some customers could not access their service. They are working on those processes. Vendor that caused it is making the fix at no cost to Allo. They are very public; they communicate at a high level when something happens. Zygielbaum said that he watched the Facebook site to see what was going on; he is very impressed that about 85% of the commenters seemed to be positive. Gonzolas thanked Moline for being up front about the problem. Moline said that they are attempting to make the system as redundant as possible, but he cannot promise it will never happen again. Lamm said that in the world of human error that's not the worst thing we've seen recently.

Zygielbaum asked if Moline had any comment on whether any future Allo apps would include PEG channels; Moline said that the company will take the suggestion to include PEG and see whether it can be accommodated.

Old Business

Network testing and report software

David Young said that the network testing software will be presented at the next meeting of our Fiber subcommittee; goal is to present to the full board at our April meeting. We want to increase the average Internet speed and are exploring ways to improve quality for Internet customers. Looking at a way for people to log in to the Cable Advisory Board website.

New Business

None.

Subcommittee Reports

Annual performance review of providers

Plan currently has the Fact Finding Phase deadline as April 30, 2018; David Young suggested that we should probably extend that deadline by a little bit.

Zygielbaum said that he would like authority to write the Mayor requesting a survey. Gonzolas mentioned that we do already have authority to use \$5000 which it looks like we won't use.

Meeks said, regarding the Definition Phase bullet point "Reliability and resilience of service", that she thinks you would be talking about keeping the service going; she's not sure that "resilience" is the right word.

Meeks suggested that we change "Services for families of limited means." to "Services for persons of limited means."

Meeks would like to see the survey include cell phone contacts as well as land lines.

Meeks would like to see the "Requests for documentation from franchisees" fleshed out; Zygielbaum agreed.

Lamm wondered, under the Reliability section, whether there is a way to get a consistent definition?

Henderson wondered, regarding the proposal for a survey, whether there is a way that we could get people to respond via social media. Gonzolas said that we might want to conduct a mail survey to ensure randomness. Neal said that the survey methods should be worked on by Gallup or whoever the survey organization is, rather than trying to do it in-house.

Huggenberger said that on the last bullet point it needs to be understood that both parties are coming together to improve conditions in areas of weakness.

Hoffman said that we don't have a legal basis to force providers to do things that aren't in the franchise, but we are empowered to gather data and understand the concerns of the citizens. On a previous performance review the Board had discussions and public hearings, and provided a public report to the City. Hoffman feels that was an important piece.

Zygielbaum commented that we want to be fair to all the providers.

Gonzolas had a question about the timing: Are we going to have special meetings? Zygielbaum suspects that we would probably have to have special meetings. We will try not to commit any more City employees' time than we need to.

Neal moved that we carry on with the plan, incorporating the points brought up in the discussion. Henderson seconded. Motion passed 9-0.

Huggenberger commented that this effort is kind of overlapping with an effort that he has to take, regarding renewal of Spectrum franchise. Perhaps the two could be combined.

Zygielbaum said that perhaps we could consider writing to the Mayor, find out what he thinks about doing a survey, and then we come back and discuss.

Lamm thinks we should do the Definition Phase, and then discuss the Survey Cost.

Meeks thinks we should write a letter indicating why we would need a professional survey.

Hoffman moved that we authorize Zygielbaum to write a letter to the Mayor, requesting funding for a survey. Engel seconded. Motion passed 9-0.

Online Complaint Form

We are looking at how to incorporate the complaint form into the existing Citizen Reporting Form. That part is delayed. Gonzolas thinks that we won't need the \$5000 that was approved by the Council.

ALLO Nonprofits/WIFI Zones

Huggenberger will schedule a meeting with Moline. Moline said that he knows where the piece of paper is but hasn't acted on it. He said that Ben Kiser from NelNet will be the contact person for that discussion.

Website

Gonzolas and Wenz gave a demo of the website changes. They need the committee to advise information that should be on the page. Engel asked if there is a place that one can report that a company is doing well; Neal said yes.

City Report

Updated channel websites

Wenz reported that each channel now has its own website. He displayed examples.

Engel asked how it works on a phone; Wenz said it works well.

Wenz said that on the YouTube and FB pages the City does live stream all of the meetings; this is accessible on Roku.

Zygielbaum asked how we get the word out on this. Gonzolas said that we can use the City Twitter account. Zygielbaum asked if the City has funding to do marketing. Wenz said that's one of the things that he's wanting to look at.

Gonzolas said that when the main City web page is available it will have easy links to the channels.

Henderson asked if we have a social media person. Gonzolas said yes, he's been with us about six months.

Zygielbaum said that it would be great to do PSAs. Wenz said that's on his list. Gonzolas said that with the recent City decision to stop accepting cardboard in the landfill, the City worked with a private company to create a video for that.

Neal said that there are a lot of people providing content for this.

Negotiating Team

Huggenberger wanted the Board to consider the issue of whether we want to appoint a member of the board to be part of the negotiation process. He said that Charter wants to be considered for informal renewal. If that doesn't happen then we would be able to consider a formal process. Huggenberger would like this board to pick a member to be part of the negotiating team. Will probably want to do a survey regardless of whether we're in informal or formal process.

Hoffman moved that we appoint Zygielbaum to serve as a member of the negotiation team; Lamm seconded. Motion passed 9-0. We will make the Evaluation Committee be the group that receives the team's reports.

Public Comments

None.

Election of Officers

The January meeting each year is our annual meeting, at which we elect officers.

Secretary

Hoffman nominated Jim Johnson, Meeks seconded, passed by acclamation.

Vice-Chair

Lamm nominated Ed Hoffman, Neal seconded, passed by acclamation.

Chair

Engel nominated Art Zygielbaum, Johnson seconded, passed by acclamation.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m. Next meeting is scheduled for April 26, 2018.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Johnson, secretary